In the News

Help Yourself in Van Nuys

Assisting civil litigants without lawyers has become a high priority for the leaders of California's legal community, including those in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

A feature article in the June 22, 2001, edition of the Los Angeles Times discussed the increasing numbers of litigants going to court without lawyers, including the approximately 1,000 individuals who visit the Van Nuys Self-Help Legal Access Center each month. The Times article mentioned that the center opened in November 2000 and will serve as a model for courthouses across the county.

The *Times* article stated that the self-help center has three full-time paid staffers, including two attorneys, but depends largely on trained volunteers. The volunteers help visitors with such legal issues as evictions, small claims, family law matters, name changes, and temporary re-

straining orders. Although the center is open to anyone, most of its users have incomes below the federal poverty line, which means that, for instance, a family of four has an annual income under \$21,000.

The exposure that the Van Nuys self-help center received in the Los Angeles Times has made more litigants aware of its services and enabled them to get help with their legal matters.



The Van Nuys Self-Help Legal Access Center in Los Angeles County assists visitors with such legal issues as evictions, small claims, family law matters, name changes, and temporary restraining orders.

Other court-related programs in the news:

"A Good Interpreter Is Hard to Find," Sacramento Bee, July 9, 2001

Described how the Superior Court of Sacramento County provides court interpreters for 15 to 25 litigants each day.

"Grant Funds Technology," Modesto Bee, July 10, 2001

Reported that the Superior Court of Stanislaus County received a \$540,000 grant from the Judicial Council for equipment to improve the court's communication capabilities. The new equipment will allow for faster Internet connections and better networking.

"Project Aims to Make Court a Friendlier Place for Kids," Daily Journal, July 6, 2001

Reported that the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a feasibility study for a supervised children's waiting room in each of the county's 13 courthouses that hear family law matters.

Council Adopts Energy Conservation Guidelines

In response to California's power situation, the Judicial Council at its July 13 meeting adopted energy conservation guidelines for all state courts. The council hopes that the guidelines will help reduce energy costs for the courts as well as contribute to an overall reduction in power consumption in the state.

Among other suggestions, the "Guidelines for Energy Conservation in California Court Facilities" advises the courts to reduce lighting levels, raise the settings of cooling system thermostats, and establish reasonable hours of operation for lights, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.

"Many courts have already taken the initiative to implement energy conservation measures," noted Chief Justice Ronald M. George. "The support of all state courts is needed, however, to ensure that the California judicial branch does its part to address statewide energy needs through practical energy-saving measures."

COURTS ALREADY CONSERVING

Even before the council adopted its energy guidelines, courts around the state had begun to conserve energy at their facilities. For example, the complex that houses the California Supreme Court, the First District of the Court of Appeal, and the Administrative Office of the Courts has decreased its energy usage by 20 percent.

Superior courts throughout the state are also conserving energy wherever possible. Frank Martinez, Assistant Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Sacramento County, says his court is minimizing lighting where it can, such as in elevator waiting areas, and is encourag-

ing staff to shut down equipment when it is not in use.

The council encourages trial courts to work with their counties, and appellate courts to work with the state Department of General Services or with their landlords, to implement the guidelines. In addition, the council has

requested that the courts report on the steps they are taking to reduce energy consumption, to provide a means of assessing the courts' contributions to the overall conservation effort.

Guidelines for Energy Conservation in California Court Facilities

- Reduce lighting levels throughout the facility. This can be accomplished by removing some of the bulbs or tubes from general work-area lighting and by reducing lighting in hallways, lobbies, and other public areas. Encourage the use of task lighting in lieu of overhead lighting wherever possible. Eliminate decorative lighting.
- Increase the settings of cooling system thermostats, taking temperature zoning into consideration wherever possible. Such thermostats are often set in the range of 68 to 72 degrees and generally should be increased to 74 to 78 degrees. Courtrooms may be set at 70 to 74 degrees because the occupants are normally in formal business attire or robes.
- Establish reasonable hours of operation for lights and for heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. For example, in warmer regions, turn HVAC on at 6 a.m. rather than earlier, and turn it off at 6 or 7 p.m. rather than later; on weekends turn on HVAC only when actual use of

- the facility is scheduled and for the limited time of building occupancy.
- Encourage informal dress, as appropriate, to help compensate for higher temperatures.
- Encourage employees to shut off lights and computers when they are not in use. Install motion detectors that turn off lights in unoccupied rooms. Turn off copiers and printers at night if they are not being used.
- ▶ Evaluate and incorporate, where possible, the detailed recommendations on energy conservation measures that are available from www.energy.dgs.ca.gov and from local utilities' Web sites and information offices.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts



New Task Force to Study Judicial Service

n July, Chief Justice Ronald M. **■**George appointed a new statewide task force that will study judicial service and the retention and compensation of state judges.

"The Task Force on Judicial Service will study ongoing issues that vitally affect the quality of the California judiciary, the largest in the nation," says Chief Justice George. "The goal is to identify the best practices in benefits, compensation, and related issues to ensure that the judicial branch attracts and retains

the most qualified judges to serve full careers on the bench."

Justice Candace D. Cooper of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, Division Two (Los Angeles), will chair the 17member panel, which includes appellate justices, trial court judges, and executive officers from throughout the state.

The task force is charged with studying and developing best practices both locally and nationally, as well as recommending training on issues that include:

- □ Sabbatical leave;
- ☐ Mentorship programs;
- ☐ Special needs and programs for new and retired judges;
- ☐ Benefits, wellness subsidies, and professional development allowances;
- ☐ Health care benefits, including services and programs;
- ☐ Compensation and retirement; and
- ☐ Resources and programs focused on the quality of judicial life.

Chief Justice George asked the task force to develop a proposed rule of court that will establish it as an advisory committee of the Judicial Council and formalize its membership structure and duties.

The Task Force on Judicial Service is an outgrowth of the Task Force on the Quality of Justice's Subcommittee on the Quality of Judicial Service. The Chief Justice appointed that subcommittee in 1998 to study ways to maintain the high quality of California's judiciary. That group submitted its final report to the Judicial Council in 1999. ■

National Day of Prayer and Remembrance

SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

PHILLIP BURTON FEDERAL BUILDING PLAZA, SAN FRANCISCO





Remarks by Ronald M. George **Chief Justice of California**

e gather here today as citizens of the world, saddened by senseless acts of hate almost too difficult to comprehend. We know that we are not alone in our grief. Not only Americans died in the tragedies of Tuesday—hundreds of citizens of nations from every part of the world were lost with them.

People from every corner of the world have expressed their deep condolences for those who have been lost and injured and for those who love them—and for the blow struck at our nation. And people in every part of the world have been reminded that when hate and evil strike, the only true victories won are by those who respond with determination, compassion, bravery, and a renewed commitment to forging a better world.

We gather here as Americans to remember those who perished Tuesday. We do not yet know the names of all of the men and women on the airliners, in the World Trade Center, and at the Pentagon, but we grieve for them, their families, and the nation. We are confident that our government will bring to justice those responsible for these horrible crimes. And together we honor the firefighters, police officers, emergency medical workers, and everyday citizens who risked their lives—often at the ultimate cost—to help others. Their acts will stand forever as an indelible symbol of the greatness of our nation.

We gather here as Californians. Our state is the most diverse society in the history of humankind. We have learned to value that diversity and to teach tolerance for people of all cultures and religions. Out of that diversity has come our strength. Over the next several days, we will be challenged not to confuse the acts of a few madmen with those of our friends and neighbors; not to respond blindly, but to respond justly. That, after all, is something we all can do—hold close to the rule of law from which the strength and power of our nation and our state derive.

Like an earthquake, this tragedy has taken from us the comfort of a sense of stability and predictability. But as we did after the earthquakes, we shall move forward and rebuild and renew. And in doing so we stand together with the people of our state, our nation, and the world in offering our sympathy for those who have lost so much, our gratitude to those who have given so greatly, and our determination that we shall prevail over hate.

Members of the Task Force **On Judicial Service**

Candace D. Cooper, Chair

Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal Second Appellate District, Division Two

Stephen Bouch

Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Napa County

Judith C. Chirlin

Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Lee Smalley Edmon

Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Timothy L. Fall

Judge of the Superior Court of Yolo County

Daniel "Mike" Hanlon (Ret.)

Former Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Four

Jamie A. Jacobs-May

Judge of the Superior Court of Santa Clara County

Robert Kuhel

Chief Administrative Officer of the Superior Court of **Orange County**

Wray F. Ladine

Judge of the Superior Court of Stanislaus County

George W. Nicholson

Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District

Peter H. Norell

Judge of the Superior Court of San Bernardino County

S. James Otero

Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Kenneth G. Peterson

Judge of the Superior Court of Sacramento County

Gloria F. Rhynes

Judge of the Superior Court of Alameda County Clay M. Smith

Judge of the Superior Court of Orange County

Ken Torre

Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Contra Costa County

Debra W. Yang

Judge of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Yolo courthouse tour



Legal professionals from the International English and Professional Programs at the University of California at Davis Exgroup had an opportunity to question Judge W. Arvid JohnSEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2001 COURT NEWS

Bay Area Counties Receive Grants to Help Children

After a highly competitive proposal process, two Bay Area superior courts were among six sites nationwide selected by the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Violence Against Women Office to receive grants to improve their services to troubled families. The Superior Courts of San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties each received a grant for more than \$300,000 annually. The grants will help the courts devise more effective systems for delivering services to families who are experiencing concurrent domestic violence and child maltreatment and are involved in court proceedings.

Although adult domestic violence and child maltreatment often occur together, until recently many communities treated the two as separate incidents. In response, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) published Effective Intervention in Domestic

Violence and Child Maltreatment Cases: Guidelines for Policy and Practice, otherwise known as the "Greenbook." The Greenbook introduced a comprehensive set of principles and recommendations for developing more effective policies and programs aimed at keeping families safe and stable.

Last December, the DOJ announced that it had selected six "demonstration sites" to receive funds that would help them implement recommendations in the NCJFCJ's Greenbook. The DOJ provided the funding through its "Collaborations to Address Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment: A Public-Private Initiative." That initiative seeks to increase collaboration among courts, child protective services, domestic violence agencies, and others in the community to develop better delivery systems for services to families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment.

SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

"What's most exciting about this grant is that the federal government is actually paying us to experiment," says Superior Court of San Francisco County Commissioner Marjorie A. Slabach. "The grant moneys have enabled us to try new methods of dealing with kids in domestic violence situations. We are being given the opportunity to ask: What would work best right here in San Francisco?"

Representatives from agencies in San Francisco that deal with children and domestic violence, including professionals from the Sheriff's, Mayor's, and District Attorney's Offices, serve on Greenbook project committees. But the primary collaborating partners in San Francisco's Greenbook project are the superior court, the Department of Human Services, and interested community members. The project's Community Advisory Committee, which consists of public

members-including past and current "clients" of the court and the Department of Human Services-currently reviews and makes recommendations on pending cases involving domestic violence and maltreatment of children. In addition, a committee of evaluators reviews old cases from juvenile dependency court and the Department of Public Health to see how outcomes affected procedure, how courts and agencies responded in the past, and how children were treated.

"Our focus is on getting the community involved, on learning what people actually need and want," says Commissioner Slabach, adding that the project was community-driven from the start. "Groups such as women's shelters and batterer treatment centers first provided the impetus for the project. This extensive grassroots activism was a key reason San Francisco was selected as a national Greenbook demonstration site."

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

"Santa Clara County stood out during the selection process as representative of an urban, socioeconomically diverse site," says Carol Barnett, Staff Attorney at Dependency Legal Services, who sits on the Executive Committee of Santa Clara's Greenbook project. "This was a perfect opportunity for us to become a model for many large, urban areas around the nation."

According to Ms. Barnett, well before the DOJ's request for proposals had been announced, a proactive group of professionals in the child protective services community in Santa Clara County had formed to study and discuss the Greenbook recommendations. One of those professionals was Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Leonard P. Edwards, who had made major contributions to the Greenbook.

According to Ms. Barnett, these public-private meetings were the first of their kind in the local child protective services community, with many participants meeting each other for the first time. Their collaborative efforts were initially fueled by funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. Now, with the recent Greenbook grant, Santa Clara County has an opportunity to investigate ways of dealing with children in domestic violence situations. "We are asking: Couldn't the kids be placed with the nonoffending parent?" adds Ms. Barnett. "Couldn't we instead provide the nonoffending parents with the services they need-with shelter, a safety plan, and appropriate services?"

For more information on San Francisco County's Greenbook project, e-mail Commissioner Marjorie A. Slabach at mslabach@sftc.org. For more information on Santa Clara County's Greenbook grant project, contact Project Manager Jennifer Sweeney, 408-882-0900; e-mail: sweeney@kidscommon.org. ■

2001–2002 Drug Court Mini-Grants Awarded

At its August 3 meeting, the Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee selected the recipients of the drug court mini-grants for 2001–2002.

The Office of Criminal Justice Planning (OCJP) has made drug court mini-grants available through the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) since 1996. However, this is the first year that the AOC has been able to channel part of the funding toward teen and youth courts.

For fiscal year 2001–2002, OCJP is providing a pass-through grant of \$1 million to fund juvenile delinquency drug courts and teen/youth courts as part of the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant program.

Teen and youth courts are alternative approaches to the traditional juvenile justice system. Typically in these courts, a youth charged with an offense can opt to forgo the hearing and sentencing procedures of the juvenile courts and agree to appear before a sentencing forum made up of a jury of his or her peers under the supervision of a judge-also known as a peer court. Because the drug court mini-grant funding will be distributed through contract agreements with local court systems, only teen and youth courts based on a model that utilizes a judicial bench officer were considered for funding.

The committee made its selections based on the following

broad grant eligibility criteria, which were approved by the Judicial Council:

- ☐ Viability of the program and its current level of financial need;
- ☐ Consistency with the California Standards of Judicial Administration and other drug court guidelines;
- ☐ Involvement of a local steering committee;
- ☐ Successful completion of statistical and financial re-

porting requirements for previous mini-grant funding periods (if applicable); and

☐ Completeness and comprehensiveness of the application.

Thirteen superior courts received juvenile delinquency drug court awards, and 11 received teen/youth court awards. The grants will reimburse these counties' programs for their expenses incurred from September 1, 2001, through June 30, 2002.

● For more information, contact Sandy Claire, Administrative Office of the Courts, 415-865-7632; e-mail: sandy.claire @jud.ca.gov. ■

Counties Receiving 2001–2002 Delinquency

Drug Court Awards

Butte, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Mendocino, Nevada, Placer, Riverside, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Clara, Shasta, and Ventura

Counties Receiving 2001–2002 Teen/Youth Court Awards

Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Humboldt, Imperial, Placer, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma, and Ventura

Collaborative justice at work



The Collaborative Justice Courts Advisory Committee met in the Community Room of the Santa Ana Police Department to discuss recommendations on the implementation of Proposition 36, decide on grant funding for juvenile delinquency drug courts and teen and youth courts (see story on this page), and hear a presentation on restorative justice from Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Candace Beason (standing). The committee is an example of the efforts being made by the courts, law enforcement, and others involved in the justice system to make collaborative problem solving a priority.